

Jesus of Nazareth

By Peter David Smith

Contrary to popular opinion Jesus had no pretensions toward being the Grecian “Christos”.

In fact he always said that plain ordinary water was the most powerful ointment you could wish for.

He was a confident man. Humble and yet he had no doubt in his own magic. He accepted that the inner circle of his followers would die for him.

He believed that he represented the embodiment of the Miracle Faction. He was the man whom God had touched. He was the man who was of God’s family. He was the third force in the temple.

There were the scripture men, the inner voice of god men and the miracle men.

He was the main one of the miracle men.

He was the Miracle Man of all in all.

He was a little too loose with his words.

He had been heard using terms which the rabbis found blasphemous and which the Romans considered sedition. He had used phrases such as “the son of my father God, who is in heaven” and “the King of the miracle men”. He was living dangerously.

His mother had been of Persian extraction and was unmarried at the time of his conception, hence “a maiden” and all the naive legend which follows on from that.

He liked the Samaritans. They believed the same things as the orthodox Jews except that they thought they could worship from anywhere in the world, not only from sacred Jerusalem. They were good, God loving, people who had only a minor disagreement with the Orthodox. They had decided that God existed everywhere equally and so could be worshipped from Egypt or Rome just as devoutly as from the Jerusalem Temple. “Good luck to them”, thought Jesus, “They are good families”.

Jesus believed that his touch was a healing touch. Many of his followers believed that too.

He was a skillful orator. He once kept a huge crowd entertained by telling them mystic stories about two fishes and five pieces of bread. The crowd listened enraptured as he told them the story of the one fish swimming against the tide and the other fish swimming *with* the tide.

He told them that the fish which swam with the tide was learning the lesson of God’s provision for all, God’s ability to help us all if we are willing to go *with* the flow of his magical power in the world. If we have faith.

Then he told them that the fish who swam *against* the tide was learning the lesson of God’s great strengthening of us all, by providing adversity which makes us stronger. By leaning against the resisting power of God. If we have faith.

He made that crowd see that God is kind on one side of his power and tough on the other side of his power and we can be blessed by both the kindness of God and the toughness of God. If we have faith.

These were the lessons of the two fishes.

Then came the lessons of the five pieces of bread.

You need to realise that the people were fasting.

He was talking about food to people who were fasting and yet, somehow, he got away with it. They didn't scorn him.

He said that, in addition to the two fishes which represent God's kindness and God's testing of our strength, there are five pieces of bread which can be savored and from which the soul may be nourished.

Firstly, he said that there is a type of bread which feeds the head and there is a type of bread which feeds the heart. Then there is a bread which feeds the body and a bread which feeds the soul. Finally, he said that the fifth bread is the bread which is shared with another. So the five powers are:

The Head

The Heart

The Body

The Soul

and The Sharing with Another

The Sharing of the bread is important because it symbolises community.

So we live as a head and a heart and a body and a soul but also as a people who are one and all as one. This, he said, is the great bread which nourishes us as we fast.

And, miraculously perhaps, they accepted everything he said. He was a marvelous speaker, he had the gift of the charm and the rhetoric. They accepted his teaching no matter how hungry they were.

Somebody said that he had some trick way of keeping afloat and walking on top of water, like he'd invented some new sort of floating shoes or some such nonsense.

People kept making up stuff like that about him. It was getting silly.

Inevitably, there was jealousy. Some men wondered why he was the great teacher when he didn't have permission from the elders of the temple. They were concerned about his power.

And then there were the Romans.

Judea had been a colony of Rome for many years and had been a colony of Greece before that. Things had settled down into a routine. We pay the Roman taxes and we live our lives and keep the traditions. Then Jesus comes along and rocks the boat.

One day he would be arrested and he knew it. But he had made arrangements for that.

His cousin Judas was almost a twin. The two of them looked alike and, if they were dressed alike Judas could very easily be mistaken for the man himself.

One day they had a big meal with all of the inner group of disciples and Jesus told Judas he was going to be the sacrifice.

Judas would be taken by the Romans and Jesus would remain free to continue teaching. It was a test of Judas's faith. The Roman soldiers would be expecting a traitor to earn a bag of silver by showing them which one was Jesus. They would be given Judas instead. The bag of silver would help the cause.

Jesus and his disciples all hoped that Judas would be released at some stage and then they would all be reunited. However, they were all aware that there was a possibility of the Romans deciding to make an example of the arrested man and have him crucified. If that happened Jesus would be free to take ship, to travel abroad and preach in foreign lands. Maybe to the silken east or to the ghostly isles in the far north.

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